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ABSTRACT

In a survey of 28,000 high school seniors, researchers found that 21,000 (75 percent) were in the labor force. The average number of hours worked per week was 16.4. The study identified the characteristics of the students and their schools that affect part-time work: (1) the higher the wage rate, the more likely a student was to work more hours per week; (2) students who believed in the importance of work, steady employment, and earning income were more likely to work more hours per week; (3) students who had a strong commitment to school were less likely to be in the labor force and worked slightly fewer hours per week if they were employed; (4) Black and Hispanic students were less likely to work and had more difficulties finding a job; (5) female students worked about one-half hour more per week than male students, were slightly more likely to work, and had less difficulties finding a job, but their salary averaged 34 cents less per hour; (6) attending a vocational or private school increased a student's wages; and (7) engaging in cooperative education and work study tended to improve a student's experience in the labor force. The study concluded that working was a student response to the desire to have immediate income and to a lack of interest in school. Therefore, teachers and administrators should integrate school assignments with job-related experiences. The study also concluded that counselors should make extra efforts to help minority students find work. (KC)

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Part-Time Work Experience of High School Seniors

Research Findings

The number of high school students who work part-time has increased steadily over the years. In a survey of 28,000 high school seniors, researchers found that 21,000 seniors (75 percent) were in the labor force (employed or actively seeking employment). Of this group, over 17,000 were employed and almost 4,000 were looking for work. The average number of hours worked per week was 16.4.

The study identified the characteristics of the students and their schools that affect part-time work:

- The higher the wage rate, the more likely a student was to work more hours per week.
- Students who believed in the importance of work, steady employment, and earning income were more likely to work more hours per week.
- Students who had a strong commitment to school were less likely to be in the labor force and worked slightly fewer hours per week if they were employed.
- Black and Hispanic students were less likely to be in the labor force, worked fewer hours per week, and were much more likely to have difficulties finding a job.
- Female students worked about one-half hour more per week than male students, were slightly more likely to be in the labor force and were less likely to have difficulties finding a job; but their salary averaged 34 cents less per hour.
- Attending a vocational or private school increased a student's wages.
- Engaging in cooperative education and work study tended to improve one's experience in the labor force.

Implications

Working part-time while in school is partly a response to the attraction of having a good income and partly an expression of lack of interest in school. Students who invest their time and energy in a part-time job receive an immediate labor market payoff. Therefore, teachers and administrators should consider integrating school assignments with job-related experiences. For example, students can be encouraged to use their job experiences as the subject for writing and speaking assignments.

Minority students are at a distinct disadvantage in the part-time labor market. Counselors and teachers should take this into account when working with these students in instructional and counseling programs. Teachers, for example, can be a strong advocate for the minority student who is seeking part-time work for the first time. Counselors can provide additional job seeking skills and act as a reference for the students to prospective employers. Counselors in a vocational school should encourage students who are seeking part-time work to apply for work related to their studies in order to obtain higher wages and to improve their experience in the work force.

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Additional Information

The final report, "Effects of Individual and School Characteristics On Part-Time Work of High School Seniors: Technical Report," was written by Lawrence Hotchkiss, John W. Bishop, and John Gardner. It is available from ERIC as ED229655.

A brochure giving the results of the study (Research You Can Use, No. 2) is available at no charge. A 6-page summary was published in the spring 1984 (vol. 2, no. 4) issue of *Facts & Findings*, a calendar subscription research series. To request the brochure or ordering information for *Facts & Findings*, contact the National Center's Program Information Office toll free at 800-848-4815 or 614-486-3655 (in Ohio and outside the continental U.S.). Cable: CTV0CEDOSU/ Columbus, Ohio. Telex: 8104821894.

This is the fourth of a series of eight "research briefs" highlighting findings of studies on education and employment conducted by the National Center and sponsored by the National Institute of Education. The summary was prepared by Ruth Gordon of the Resource and Referral Service.

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Classroom materials based on this research will be available in 1986. Contact the National Center's Program Information Office for availability of unique new materials in THE EMPLOYER'S CHOICE series, a package for teaching students successful techniques for getting and keeping jobs.

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